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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to prepare a summary list of on the job social/interpersonal behavior areas as identified both in the professional literature and in assessment instruments concerned with mentally retarded adults: and determine which of these behavior areas were considered to be most relevant to job tenure, as viewed by rehabilitation service providers. The Ss were 68 job placement personnel at sheltered workshops in 11 western states. The results indicated strong agreement among the respondents on the extent to which each behavior areas was relevant to job tenure. Based on the frequency of response, the following eight social/interpersonal areas were rated as most relevant to job tenure: (1) following supervisor instructions: (2) responding appropriately to supervisor criticism or correction: (3) refraining from exhibiting bizarre or irritating behavior: (4) working independently of direct supervision: (5) maintaining an appropriate personal appearance: (6) interacting appropriately with coworkers while on the job: (7) controlling aggressive behavior: and (8) requesting assistance as needed. (Author)

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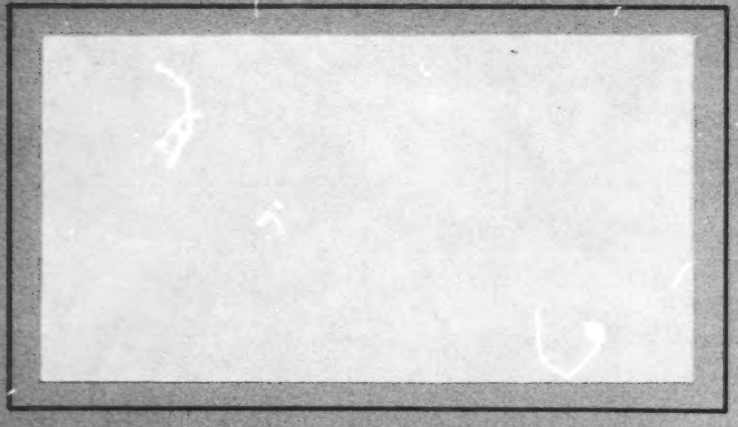

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CENTER PAPER NO. 115

AN IDENTIFICATION OF SOCIAL/INTERPERSONAL SKILLS RELEVANT TO JOB TENURE FOR MENTALLY RETARDED ADULTS

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April 1980

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Information Capsule

The purpose of this study was to (1) prepare a summary list of on-the-job social/interpersonal behavior areas as identified both in the professional literature and in assessment instruments concerned with mentally retarded adults; and (2) determine which of these behavior areas were considered to be most relevant to job tenure, as viewed by rehabilitation service providers. The subjects were 68 job placement personnel at sheltered workshops in 11 western states. The results indicated strong agreement among the respondents on the extent to which each behavior area was relevant to job tenure. Based on the frequency of response, the following eight social/interpersonal areas were rated as most relevant to job tenure: (1) following supervisor instructions; (2) responding appropriately to supervisor criticism or correction; (3) refraining from exhibiting bizarre or irritating behavior; (4) working independently of direct supervision; (5) maintaining an appropriate personal appearance; (6) interacting appropriately with co-workers while on the job; (7) controlling aggressive behavior; and (8) requesting assistance as needed.

The results of the study represent the judgments of only one group, namely, sheltered workshop personnel. Additional research is currently underway which will further delineate social/interpersonal problem areas, and include input from both competitive employers and people with mental retardation. The result of this research will be an on-job social/interpersonal skills assessment instrument.

Introduction

The ability to work and earn a living is one of the hallmarks of competent adulthood in our society. Although mentally retarded people have historically had difficulty in finding and maintaining employment, they recognize the importance of achieving this goal if they are to be seen as normal, competent citizens. In Edgerton's (1967) participant-observation study of deinstitutionalized mentally retarded adults, this concern came up again and again as they discussed their attempts to present themselves as competent individuals. One woman said, "I'm just as good as anybody else. I've seen plenty of people who are worse than me outside that institution. It's just that I've got to get a job so I can be like other people" (p. 64).

Follow-up studies on community adjustment have demonstrated that vocational adjustment is a feasible goal for mentally retarded people (Baller, Charles, & Miller, 1967; Edgerton, 1967; Edgerton & Bercovici, 1976; Kennedy, 1966; Rosen, Clark, & Kivitz, 1977). However, success in the crucial area of employment has not come easily for them. Research exists supporting the fact that mentally retarded people still experience a variety of problems in the work setting (Edgerton, 1967; Edgerton & Bercovici, 1976; Foss, Bostwick, & Harris, 1978; Kolstoe, 1961; Rosen et al., 1977).

In a review of research on the vocational adjustment of educable mentally retarded adolescents, Niziol and De Blassie (1972) concluded that most work maladjustments of these people were, in general, attributed to poor interpersonal skills. Their concern regarding the

interpersonal/social skill deficits of mentally retarded people is shared by a sizable number of professional researchers in the field (Bae, 1968; Eagle, 1967; Foss et al., 1978; Kolstoe, 1961; Meyers, 1968; Neuhaus, 1967; Peckham, 1951; Rosen et al., 1977; Windle, Stewart, & Brown, 1961).

A recent study by Foss et al. (1978) examined the perceptions of both mentally retarded adults and rehabilitation service providers regarding the current problems of mentally retarded adults. Both respondent groups identified a variety of social/interpersonal skill deficits in all areas examined. In fact, social/interpersonal concerns constituted the largest single category of problem statements.

In this same study, a second sample of rehabilitation service providers was asked to prioritize the identified problem statements. Three of the six statements ranked as highest priority problems consisted of social/interpersonal skill deficits. "Lacking the social skills necessary for tenure after job placement" was identified by the service providers as one of the highest priority problems in the area of employment. When 24 nationally recognized researchers in mental retardation were asked to prioritize the same set of statements (in terms of need and feasibility for research) "lacking the social skills necessary for job tenure" was ranked as the highest priority employment problem.

The professional literature reflects substantial agreement among the writers regarding the strong relationship between social/interpersonal competence and vocational success for mentally retarded

people. Each writer, however, uses somewhat different terminology in discussing social/interpersonal skill deficits. Examples of the various emphases noted within the general social/interpersonal area include "poor social self-esteem" (Hollender, 1974), "personality problems" and "antisocial behavior" (Eagle, 1967), and "lack of work tolerance" (Domino & McGarty, 1972).

A similar situation exists within the area of assessment instruments for on-the-job social/interpersonal skills. There are no behavior checklists or rating scales exclusively devoted to assessing mentally retarded people's functioning in on-the-job social/interpersonal skills, but relevant items are contained in a number of available vocational assessment instruments. Following a comprehensive review of over 200 such assessment instruments, Walls and Werner (1977) identified 24 checklists and rating scales containing items of a social/interpersonal nature within the work setting. There is wide variation in the number of social/interpersonal skill items included within each of these 24 instruments, ranging from 1 to 56 items. The specificity and content of items varies greatly from instrument to instrument as well.

The frequency with which the social/interpersonal area is mentioned in both the literature and assessment instruments attests to widespread concern regarding its importance. However, there is much variation in the specificity with which social/interpersonal skills are noted and the particular emphasis that is taken. In short, there is little apparent consensus regarding the specific nature of social/interpersonal skills necessary for job success.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to (1) prepare a summary list of on-the-job social/interpersonal behavior areas as identified both in the professional literature and in assessment instruments; and (2) determine which of these behavior areas are considered to be most relevant to job tenure, as viewed by rehabilitation service providers. More specifically, the following questions were addressed:

1. What on-the-job social/interpersonal behavior areas are represented in the professional literature and assessment instruments?
2. Of the identified social/interpersonal behavior areas which ones do rehabilitation service providers see as most relevant to job tenure for mentally retarded adults?
3. Of the identified social/interpersonal behavior areas which ones do rehabilitation service providers see as least relevant to job tenure for mentally retarded adults?
4. To what extent will rehabilitation service providers agree regarding the behavior areas they feel are most and least relevant to job tenure?

Review of the Literature

The following review will focus on two aspects of the research literature: (1) the extent to which social/interpersonal competence has been found to be associated with job tenure or work adjustment

for mentally retarded individuals, and (2) the specific nature of social/interpersonal competence found to be important in each case.

Three predictive studies will be reviewed first. Rosen, Kivitz, Clark, and Floor (1970) collected data on 29 demographic, psychometric, and behavioral rating variables for 65 institutionalized retarded persons who were later discharged to independent community living. Criterion variables included a number of items relevant to vocational adjustment, such as number of jobs held since discharge and gross annual income. A number of significant correlations between predictor and criterion variables were found, but the correlation coefficients tended to be quite low. Rosen et al. (1970) noted, however, that the only predictive behavioral ratings that were significantly related to criterion variables were those dealing with employability. When the criterion variables were factor analyzed, a General Adjustment Factor was found, with loadings from the two variables of overall vocational adjustment and overall social adjustment. In regard to this point, Rosen et al. (1970) stated: "Relations with supervisors and co-workers, and even specific job responsibilities, may require the same qualities of social perception and responsiveness that are necessary for adequate social functioning after work hours" (p. 732). The results of this study, then, lend support to the notion that social functioning is related to vocational functioning in some general sense, but offer little in the way of specific information regarding this relationship.

Song and Song (1969) collected cognitive, personality, and demographic data on 45 male and female retarded state hospital residents prior to their obtaining full-time jobs in the community. When each

subject had been employed in the community for at least two weeks, they were rated by their employers on a job efficiency rating scale which assessed work ability and work habits. Song and Song included three predictors in the social/interpersonal area: ratings of withdrawn behavior, bizarre behavior, and aggressive behavior. None of these proved to be predictors of patients' future job efficiency in community employment. A key element in considering this study may be the use of job efficiency as a criterion variable, rather than job tenure or work adjustment. Job efficiency is logically more closely related to job skills than to social skills.

Hollender (1974) attempted to predict work adjustment for 25 sixteen-year-old mentally retarded sheltered workshop clients. Measures included the Social Self-Esteem Scale, ratings by work adjustment supervisors on positive and negative verbal interactions with clients, and the Minnesota Employment Satisfactoriness Inventory. The social self-esteem and work adjustment measures were correlated. In addition, high work adjustment ratings at first evaluation were predictive of positive verbal interactions as rated by staff at second evaluation, one month later. This study, like the Rosen et al. (1970) study, supports the notion of a relationship between social and vocational functioning in the work setting.

Another approach to understanding work adjustment in retarded individuals has been to simply take some measures of personal characteristics and of work adjustment, and determine the extent to which they are correlated. Domino and McGarty (1972) employed this approach. They assessed 35 mentally retarded young women in a shel-

tered workshop using the Sonoma Checklist (SCL), Work Adjustment Rating Form (WARF), and a personal interview. The SCL, a 210-adjective checklist developed specifically for use with mentally retarded persons, has five scales, including Personal Adjustment and Self-Confidence. The WARF has eight subscales assessing such areas as amount of supervision required and acceptance of rules/authority. A number of positive correlations among the three measures were found. In particular, both the SCL self-confidence and need-achievement scales were significantly correlated with all eight scales of the WARF. Individuals seen as having achieved a satisfactory level of work adjustment were characterized as independent, self-confident, resourceful, adaptable, and exhibiting a high energy output. The authors note that the results, in addition to supporting the initial hypothesis, are equally consistent with the notion that work adjustment, as measured by the WARF, is simply reflective of general adjustment as evidenced in a work setting.

A number of researchers have grouped subjects into various categories (e.g., employed, and unemployed, high problem and low problem) in terms of vocational adjustment, and then compared the groups in terms of their personal/social characteristics. Warren (1961), for example, divided 38 vocational adjustment training program clients into an employed (N = 27) and unemployed (N = 11) group based upon whether or not they had secured a job within one month of leaving the program. As rated by their supervisors in the training program, the two groups were significantly different on the following personal/social dimensions: self-confidence, cheerfulness, cooperation with

supervisor, cooperation with other employees, minding own business, and mixing socially with other employees. They were also rated significantly differently on a general factor of personality and social adjustment.

Appell, Williams, and Fishell (1962) compared 12 former workshop clients who had been placed in competitive employment with 25 workshop clients who were in a long-term training program at the same workshop. In the social attitudes and adjustment area of the Work Evaluation Report (WER), the employed group was rated significantly higher on self-confidence, grooming, cooperativeness, acceptance of supervision, acceptance of group, acceptance by group, and communication. In the area of work approach, the employed group received significantly better ratings on bizarre behavior, amount of attention seeking, initiative, and degree of supervision.

In a later study, the same authors used a criterion for categorizing workshop clients that reflected long-term job success instead of initial success at simply finding a job (Appell, Williams, & Fishell, 1964-65). Fifteen clients who had been employed for at least six months following workshop training (successes) were compared with 11 clients who had been employed but were fired before they had worked for six months (failures). Comparison of the two groups in terms of the WER was impossible due to a constant rating error, but employers' reasons for firing the clients were noted. Of 21 placements (a number of the failures were placed in more than one job), 15 were expressed as being due to limitations in the worker's ability. Within this

category, reasons included: "deviant sexual behavior," "lonesomeness," "absenteeism," "lack of know how," and "too slow."

Phelps (1969) studied 89 young mentally retarded women who participated in a special rehabilitation program. Twelve variables based upon information obtained from clients' records and professional staff judgments were investigated. Forty-nine of the subjects were later rehabilitated into competitive or semi-competitive employment, while the remaining 40 were not rehabilitated. When the two groups were compared, family characteristics, emotional problems, special education training, and client attitudes did not discriminate between them. There were, however, significant differences between the two groups on professional staff ratings of suitability for work placement, and social and vocational adjustment.

In all but one of the studies examined in this review, appropriate social/interpersonal functioning has appeared as a significant factor in relation to some vocational criterion. Social/interpersonal functioning has sometimes been identified in terms of traits (e.g., self-confidence, responsibility), and sometimes in terms of behavior (e.g., bizarre behavior, amount of attention-seeking). In addition, a variety of assessment formats have been used, including adjective checklists, rating scales, client and supervisor interview, and overall ratings of functioning. Finally, the criterion of vocational success has been variously defined as getting a job, keeping a job, job efficiency, or getting a good score on one of several work adjustment measures.

The fact that the relationship between social/interpersonal factors and job-related criteria was revealed by such a variety of

approaches can only mean that it is, indeed, a significant one. It is difficult to be more specific. The variety of ways in which social/interpersonal functioning has been defined and measured to date offers much in the way of interesting hypotheses but little in the way of consistent results.

Method

The purpose of this study was to prepare a summary list of those on-the-job social/interpersonal behavior areas associated with vocational adjustment, and to determine the extent to which each behavior area was perceived as relevant to job tenure by rehabilitation service providers.

Subjects

Subjects were job placement personnel at 93 sheltered workshops in eleven western states. A recent study done at the Oregon Rehabilitation Research and Training Center in Mental Retardation (Foss et al., 1978) identified and categorized those workshops serving mentally retarded clients in an 11-state area. Workshops in the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming were identified, and then classified by number of clients; small (0-50 clients), medium (50-100 clients) and large (over 100 clients).

Medium and large workshops are those most likely to employ a staff member specializing in placing clients in competitive employ-

ment, and thus were chosen to be the respondents to the questionnaire. One questionnaire was sent to each medium (N = 60) and large (N = 33) workshop identified. The director of each workshop was asked to give the questionnaire to the job placement specialist at his/her workshop, or the person who most approximated that role.

Instrument

The instrument for this study was a questionnaire consisting of the 21 most frequently noted social/interpersonal behavior areas appearing in the literature and assessment instruments containing on-the-job social/interpersonal items. The literature review process for developing the questionnaire had two components. One of these was an examination of the vocational behavior checklists and rating scales containing on-the-job social/interpersonal skill items, as identified in the Walls and Werner review (1977). These checklists were developed at state schools and rehabilitation facilities, and provide a listing of those social/interpersonal skills considered important by rehabilitation professionals concerned with the employment of mentally retarded adults. Sixteen of the checklists identified by Walls and Werner were available and were examined for on-the-job social/interpersonal items.

The second component involved a similar exploration of relevant literature. Over 150 articles were identified, through two separate computer literature searches. One of these searches used a variety of descriptors for social/interpersonal skills, problems and training programs, combined with a variety of descriptors for mentally handicapped adults and teenagers. The other search used the same terms to

denote mentally handicapped people and combined these with the concepts of work adjustment and occupational mobility. Articles thus identified were studied for relevant statements, both in terms of specific examples of social/interpersonal skill problems with respect to job tenure, and for more general statements about the importance of social/interpersonal functioning and its relationship to vocational success. Statements about job-related skills (e.g., arriving on time for work, demonstrating knowledge of safety procedures) were not included.

As both the professional literature and behavioral checklists and rating scales were examined, a list was made of the social/interpersonal concepts, traits, skills and behaviors mentioned and the frequency with which each occurred. Much variation was found in the degree of specificity with which statements were made. Thus, statements were grouped according to their concern for a particular area, whatever their level of specificity. The only statements not included in this grouping process were very general ones, like "poor social adjustment." Once the statements were grouped, three people examined statements within each behavior area for which there were at least two statements and decided upon a summary statement reflecting the major concern within that particular area. The resulting 21 statements formed the basis for the questionnaire.

Procedure

One copy of the questionnaire was sent to each of the 93 identified workshops with a cover letter to the workshop director briefly

explaining the project. Respondents were asked to note which five of the 21 social/interpersonal behavior areas they felt were most relevant to job tenure in competitive employment for mentally retarded people, and which five areas they felt were least relevant. Space was provided for the respondents to include any additional behavior areas they felt were relevant.

Results

Questionnaires were returned by 68 of the 93 sheltered workshops to which they were sent. Seven questionnaires were returned as undeliverable by the post office. Thus, the return rate was 79%. Of the 68 questionnaires received, 64 were usable for data analysis. Table 1 shows the ratings for each statement on the questionnaire.

Fifty-two people rated "following supervisor instructions" as most relevant, making it the statement with by far the highest frequency of most relevant ratings. Seven other statements were rated as most relevant by at least 19 people. The remaining 13 statements each received 16 or less most relevant ratings.

Among statements rated as least relevant, "maintaining a sense of humor" received the greatest number of ratings (N = 49). This was closely followed by "offering assistance to co-workers as needed," which was rated as least relevant by 45 respondents. Seven other statements received between 17 and 37 least relevant ratings. The remaining 12 statements each received 10 or less ratings as least relevant.

Table 1

Frequencies of Ratings as Most Relevant and Least Relevant

	Most Relevant	Least Relevant
Statements Receiving 19 or more "Most Relevant" Ratings		
1. Following supervisor instructions	52	0
2. Responding appropriately to supervisor criticism or correction	31	1
3. Refraining from exhibiting bizarre or irritating behavior	29	5
4. Working independently of direct supervision	27	8
5. Maintaining an appropriate personal appearance	24	6
6. Interacting appropriately with co-workers while on the job	22	5
7. Controlling aggressive behavior	20	4
8. Requesting assistance as needed	19	7
Statements Receiving 17 or More "Least Relevant" Ratings		
9. Maintaining a sense of humor	1	49
10. Offering assistance to co-workers as needed	0	45
11. Performing without undue anxiety in the presence of the supervisor	1	37
12. Interacting appropriately with co-workers during lunch and breaks	3	28
13. Utilizing interpersonal communication skills	10	22
14. Refraining from stealing others' money or property	9	19
15. Behaving sexually in ways consistent with social norms	6	19
16. Accepting changes in supervisors or co-workers	16	18
17. Working cooperatively on group tasks	7	17
Remaining Statements		
18. Working without disrupting others	16	3
19. Maintaining work relationships with supervisor without overly friendly or hostile behavior	5	10
20. Working without excessive complaining	5	5
21. Working without being unduly distracted by the behavior or presence of others	16	7

The extent to which the 64 respondents agreed in their ratings of the 21 statements was assessed by using Ebel's method for estimating reliability of raters, with the statistic known as the intraclass correlation (Guilford, 1954). Ebel's formula is:

$$r_{kk} = \frac{V_c - V_e}{V_c}$$

where r_{kk} = reliability of ratings for all raters

V_c = variance of content for items

V_e = variance for error

k = number of raters

Following along the lines of traditional analysis of variance computations, sums of squares are computed for the rating task and for error, which includes rater variability. In order to compute this statistic, each individual's rating of each statement was assigned one of three ranks: the five statements the individual rated as most relevant were assigned a rank of 1; the five statements the individual rated as least relevant were assigned a rank of 3; and the remaining 11 statements were given a rank of 2, denoting the fact that they fell in the middle on the relevance dimension for that person. The reliability for the mean ratings of the 64 raters, as estimated by the intraclass correlation statistic, was .97. Interpreting this statistic in line with the analysis of variance model, it can be seen that the raters did not contribute a significant proportion of the variance. In fact, raters contributed at most 3% of

the total variance. Thus, it can be concluded that the 64 raters were in substantial agreement with one another on the rating task.

Looking at the rating frequencies in Table 1, the high level of agreement among the 64 respondents is evident. The only statement that received a similar number of most relevant and least relevant ratings was "accepting changes in supervisors or co-workers," which was rated as most relevant by 16 people and least relevant by 18 people.

Discussion

Among statements rated as most relevant, the two with the highest frequency were "following supervisor instructions" and "responding appropriately to supervisor criticism or correction." These may be seen as two aspects of the most basic skill for a mentally retarded person in a work setting, the ability to respond appropriately to supervisor communication in order to carry out necessary tasks. Two other statements directly related to job task performance were also frequently rated as most relevant, "working independently of direct supervision" and "requesting assistance as needed." Thus, four of the eight most relevant statement are directly task-related statements.

The other four most relevant statements do not appear to have any common elements. One of the four is concerned exclusively with appropriate interactions with co-workers, "interacting appropriately with co-workers while on the job." The remaining three statements in the most

relevant group have potential relevance to interactions between the mentally retarded worker and any person present in the work setting. (Two of these statements are concerned with controlling negative behavior that can have interpersonal consequences, i.e., "refraining from exhibiting bizarre or irritating behavior" and "controlling aggressive behavior." The third statement is concerned with the worker's appearance, "maintaining an appropriate personal appearance.") Thus, the most relevant group of statements includes four statements directly related to task performance and four statements having no readily apparent characteristics in common.

In the least relevant group of statements, none of the statements were as directly task-related as the four statements in the most relevant group. Two statements are somewhat task-related, i.e., "offering assistance to co-workers as needed" and "working cooperatively on group tasks," but these are concerned with co-worker interaction as it is related to task performance. The dominant mode of task performance in workshops, however, is that each person works alone and gets help, if necessary, from the supervisor. Thus, the statements regarding offering assistance to co-workers and working on group tasks do not reflect skills that are needed frequently in the workshop setting or, for that matter, the competitive employment setting. This may be why they received a relatively large number of least relevant ratings. Other than the lack of a direct task orientation among the nine statements receiving least relevant ratings, they do not appear to have any particular elements in common that led to their being seen as least relevant.

The next part of the discussion will focus on several methodological aspects of the study that deserve consideration in putting the results into perspective.

The first methodological aspect to be considered is related to the rating task. Subjects were asked to compare all of the 21 behavior areas along one dimension, their relevance to job tenure. This task was complicated by the fact that the 21 areas were not necessarily uniform along other dimensions. Statements such as "refraining from stealing others' money or property" reflect concern for negative behavior that may be relatively infrequent in occurrence, but can have major implications for job tenure when it does occur. A statement such as "responding appropriately to supervisor criticism or correction," on the other hand, refers to problem behavior that may occur to some degree with many more mentally retarded employees than does stealing, but probably can be tolerated by the supervisor for a longer period of time before it actually poses a threat to the mentally retarded employee's job tenure. Yet "responding appropriately to supervisor criticism or correction" received 31 most relevant ratings, while "refraining from stealing others' money or property" received only 9 most relevant ratings. Thus, it is possible that the questionnaire respondents took frequency of problem occurrence into account, in addition to considering the absolute relevance of each behavior area to job tenure in making their relevance ratings.

Another aspect of the rating task relates to the least relevant ratings. Respondents were not allowed to rate any behavior areas as

being counter-productive, or negatively related to job tenure; all statements were worded so as to represent positive attributes. It is conceivable that some statements, such as "maintaining a sense of humor" and "offering assistance to co-workers as needed" might have been seen as representing counter-productive qualities by some respondents. Such respondents might feel that an excess of these qualities (e.g., too much laughter) could get in the way of good task performance by the mentally retarded worker, thus jeopardizing job tenure. Given the structure of the task, the only way that such sentiments could have been expressed was for respondents to rate these as least relevant statements. It is possible that this was a factor in the ratings given to behavior areas in the least relevant group.

Finally, it must be noted that the results of this study represent the judgments of only one subject group. Had competitive employers or mentally retarded workers been asked to make the same judgments, the results might have been different.

Conclusions and Implications

This project has theoretical foundations in a behavioral view of competence. Goldfried and d'Zurilla, (1969), outlined a model for such a view of competence, and a set of procedures for assessing it. Within their framework, the emphasis is on positive coping skills rather than deficits in adaptive behavior. In particular, the focus of interest is on <u>effective responses</u> that may be made by individuals

to specific situations they are likely to face within the setting in question.

The effectiveness of a response may be judged by the extent to which it resolves the problematic nature of the situation, and at the same time produces a maximum of positive consequences and a minimum of negative ones. This includes the possibility that there may be more than one effective response to a particular problematic situation. Thus, the definition of competence is taken, operationally, to be the adequacy or effectiveness with which the individual can respond to the various problematic situations which confront him or her. Within this definition, maladaptive behavior may be viewed as ineffective behavior, because it does not serve to resolve the problematic nature of the situation, or because the maladaptive behavior results in negative consequences.

When such a model is applied to competence of mentally retarded adults within the work setting, the focus of interest is on discovering particular problem situations that occur relatively frequently and on effective responses that can be made in these situations.

The present study represents an initial step in the process of discovering particular problem situations that occur for mentally retarded adults in the work setting. It was carried out in order to focus future research efforts toward relevant on-the-job social/interpersonal problem situations. The judges were able to agree with each other reasonably well regarding those areas most relevant to job tenure. Given the level of agreement, the results presented earlier

may appropriately be used as a starting point for future research, with the goal of specifying the skills within each of the relevant behavior areas that are critical for job tenure.

Such research, using the results of this preliminary questionnaire, is in fact currently underway at the Oregon R-T Center. The goal of this research is an instrument for assessing the social/interpersonal competence of mentally retarded adults in competitive employment. The research will be carried following the behavioral-analytic model outlined by Goldfried and d'Zurilla.

The behavioral-analytic model suggests five stages of test development, which will be applied to each of the relevant behavior areas that have been identified. In the first stage, situational analysis, problematic situations within the behavior area will be identified, together with their particular characteristics. In stage two, response enumeration, a wide variety of responses, both effective and ineffective, will be identified for each problematic situation. The third stage is response evaluation. Each possible response will be evaluated for effectiveness by persons who are in positions of authority in the employment setting. In stage four, development of measurement format, the results of the first three stages will be developed into an assessment instrument, using an appropriate measurement technique. Finally, stage five, evaluation of the measure, involves the application of appropriate statistical procedures for establishing the validity and reliability of the measure. The input of sheltered workshop staff, competitive employers, and mentally retarded workers themselves will be solicited at various steps throughout the test development process.

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